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ABSTRACT

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of deception and how it functions in interpersonal relationships, this paper explores deception as a valid and essential part of human interaction processes. The paper includes an in-depth review of social science literature on deception, specifically, R. E. Turner, C. Edgley, and G. Olmstead's Information Control Model and M. R. Parks's five deception contribution areas. Additionally, a look at deception as it functions in interpersonal relationships is included in an analysis of Henrik Ibsen's "The Wild Duck," which serves as a representation of the phenomenon of deception as it functions in parent/child, husband/wife, professional/patient, and friend/friend relationships. The paper argues that the use of Ibsen's fictional capsule of human experience provides a fresh, objective vantage point for an examination of deception as it functions within the family system. (HTH)

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DECEIVE IT OR NOT:

DECEPTION IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

by

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B.A., Boise State University, 1981

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Deception is an important and essential communication act in interpersonal relationships. Although most often devalued in our society, deception is a common communication phenomena in our everyday lives. As Wolk and Henley point out, "EVERYONE lies. And the person who denies that he lies is the most egregious liar of all."[1] Little attention has been focused on deception as an important and essential phenomena in relationship development. Even philosophers have done little to analyze problems of deception because of the intertwined psychological and political impact it might have.[2] Bok notes that more philosophers deem it more theoretically challenging to deal with "truth" than deception. Most research on deception in communication studies has concentrated on the behavioral cues of deception for the purpose of detecting it.[3] Sociologists, Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's (TEO) research on deception provides us with a typology of psychologically-oriented deception communication strategies which function to establish, maintain, sustain, and/or terminate relationships.[4] Their concept of deception contrasts a popularly held assumption that complete disclosure is key to the development of intimate relationships.

Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead define deception as a communication act by an actor who restricts and/or distorts information to another by saying something other than what he would have said if, in his judgment, he had been completely honest.[5] A contrast to deception, according to TEO, is a "total honesty" discourse wherein all relevant knowledge, facts, or findings that one is aware and cognizant of are

disclosed.[6] Total honesty and self-disclosure are generally viewed as "telling it all" kinds of communication behaviors. Total honesty as defined by Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead discloses all knowledge, facts, and findings, whereas popular concepts of self-disclosure is a "telling it all" about self. Both concepts assume that it is possible to tell everything there is to tell, but this is a misconception in that no message says it all.

If it were possible to tell or reveal everything to others, the consequences could be damaging. It is interesting to note the cautions by many concerning the limitations and dangers of total honesty discourse and self-disclosure. Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead stress that complete disclosure is not always in keeping with our best interests. In fact, it is doubtful that social relationships can be developed, maintained, or nurtured with a "total honesty" discourse.[7] Rossiter and Pearce concur with this view: "There are times when you should avoid honesty and times when you should respect another person's request that he be allowed to avoid honesty."[8] Marcel Eck draws from Jankelevitch's wisdom: "There is a way of being right that is worse than imposture and calumny."[9] Powell warns of the consequences to individuals with inappropriate demands of self disclosure.

> We are tempted to unmask others, to smash their defenses, to leave them naked and blinking in the light of the illumination provided by our expose. It could be tragic in its results. If the psychological pieces come unglued, who will pick them up and put poor Humpty Dumpty Human Being together again? Will you? Can You?[10]

All of this to say, honesty for honesty's sake can be brutal and sadistic. Total honesty and self-disclosure in the extreme of "telling all there is to tell" may have unsatisfactory consequences.

Self-disclosure has been identified as the cornerstone toward intimacy in relationships. But, just as there are questions about the value of total self-disclosure with individuals, there are also questions about the relationship between self-disclosure and intimacy in relationships. Parks' recent review of self-disclosure research indicates that there is no conclusive evidence to suggest a strong link between self-disclosure and intimacy. He writes: "Self-disclosure apparently does not result in interpersonal attraction, communicative accuracy, or mental health in any direct or unqualified way."[11] In consequence, Parks recommends a dialectic approach in communication research which examines deception as well as self-disclosure to provide a more balanced view of human interaction processes. The purpose of this paper will be to explore the phenomena of deception as a valid and essential part of human interaction processes.

Two questions are explored in this study to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of deception as a valid and essential part of human interaction processes:

(A) What is the nature of the phenomena of deception?

(B) How does deception function in interpersonal relationships?

Investigation of the phenomena of deception and its function in interpersonal relationships includes a review of Social Science literature on deception. Specifically, Turner, Edgley, and Olmsteads'

Information Control Model and Parks' five deception contribution areas are reviewed in depth. Additionally, a study of deception as it functions in interpersonal relationships is included in an analysis of deception in Henrik Ibsen's fictional dramatic work, The Wild Duck.[12] Ibsen's work serves as a re-presentation of the phenomena of deception as it functions in parent-child, husband-wife, professional-patient, and friend-friend relationships. The use of Ibsen's fictional capsule of human experience provides a fresh, objective vantage point for an examination of deception as it functions within the family system.[13]

The Nature of the Phenomena of Deception

The nature of deception is explored in the areas of deception concepts, deception constructs, deception components, deception development, and reasons for deception. Theorists conceptualize deception in a number of different ways. Deception is intentional, interactional, and relative. Additionally, it is a construct of social meaning. Most concepts of deception assume implicitly, at least, that there is an absolute Truth existing somewhere and that deception is an intentional act to withhold the Truth from others. Knapp, Hart, and Dennis conceptualize deception as having many forms which are characterized by verbal and nonverbal behaviors that intentionally add or subtract from what a communicator perceives as truth. Their view is that deception functions in varying degrees of intentional fabrication to meet our relational purposes.[14] Bok agrees that all deceptive messages have within them variations of intentionality. Deception, according to Bok, takes place when one person for one reason or another inten-

tionally adds or subtracts information that alters the communicator's perceived truth.[15] Both perspectives presented here characterize deception as an intentional act to withhold the "true" information from others.

Deception is also conceptualized as interactional in that what one person says or does affects others. Goffman stresses that when an individual appears before others, his actions not only influence others, it also influences the definition of a situation.[16] Knapp and Comadena explain the interactional dynamics of lying: "Lying is the conscious alteration of information a person believes to be true in order to significantly change another's perceptions from what the deceiver thought they would be without the alteration."[17] Here, the interactional characteristics of deception are seen as influencing or changing another's perception of things from what s/he thought they were.

Knapp and Comadena conceptualize deception as relative in addition to it being interactional. What may be harmful deceptive acts to one person may be an act of loving concern for another. Deceptive acts cannot be viewed as constant negatives across people and situations.[18]

The conceptualizations of deception as intentional, interactional and relative are joined by Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's concept of deception as a construct of social meaning. They state:

> . . . since our culture is a tissue of lies and contradiction, and since social meanings are constructs anyway, the best one can do is engage in one polite fiction

> after another, thereby keeping relationships and meanings alive in world that may be rapidly losing both.[19]

Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's constructs of deception are described in two verbal forms of expression, distortion and concealment. Each form has within it various types of deception constructs. The first form, distortion, occurs when the actor gives information which misrepresents that which he believes to be accurate or true. Three types of distortion are presented:

(1) Lies - information control is coded. What an actor says contradicts what he would have said if he had been totally honest. Information in B and C are contradictory. Lies range from white lies to exploitative prevarications. Lies prevent communication of discourse which could embarrass, spoil the presentation of self, insult the other, or be offensive in some way.

(2) Exaggeration, Type I - the actor gives more information through an overstatement in order to justify terminating the encounter. B contains C plus more information. For example, an actor might overstate a task that needs to be done as a final word, thus, ending the conversation.

(3) Exaggeration, Type II - the actor gives more information by using modifiers to produce an overstatement. B contains less information than C in the sense that

verbal modifiers in B are the superlative to those in C.

A second form of deception, concealment, refers to relevant information kept from the other. Four types of concealment are identified:

(1) Half-truths, Type I - the discourse contains only a part of what the actor considers complete disclosure or an absolutely honest statement. Type I half-truths facilitate information control by withholding or concealing part of the data and contains more information than an honest answer would have. B contains less information than C.

(2) Half-truths, Type II - a partial distoriton by virtue of modifiers which alter the emphasis of the statement. Modifiers "play down" the truth or "give less than" an honest evaluation.

The premise of half-truths is that it takes some truth to make a good lie.

(3) Secrets - an actor remains silent when he has relevant information or feelings to add to the conversation. Silence is a type of complete concealment.

(4) Diversionary responses - response diverts the topic of conversation and conceals an actor's honest evaluation. Such diversion distorts an actor's true feelings by detouring undisclosed information.[20]

Deception can only be recognized through an examination of interdependent components of human experience interacting together. Three interrelated component areas of human communicative experience must be taken into account. They include the context of a communication act,[21] the behavioral actions of the communicant involved, and the verbal expressions used. The relational aspects of deception experience components are important to note. The identification of deception communication acts cannot be done in a vacuum. The relationship between the context of a situation and the actions either prior to or following the verbal or nonverbal expression has to be taken into account to even begin to recognize deception constructs. No one component area alone is adequate to judge any holding back of information.

The development of deception processes begins at the early stages of infancy. Deceptive communicative strategies precede the development of verbal language. Deception communicative strategies are adopted in the early stages of infancy through "communication expressions that are often strategic denials learned before we learn to approve of life."[22] Meerloo suggests that the infant transmits messages through defensive mimicry and camouflage in response to attentions received by his/her parents' reaction to the newborn's natural staring-into-space eye behaviors with please of "look at me." The natural instinct for attention, motivates the infant to "feign interest and smile back but not because of his/her own spontaneous expression."[23] Deception in this stage is simply a way of realizing a desire. Later, childhood experiences introduce the individual to

contradictory messages. The virtues of honesty and straightforwardness emphasize the notion of deception as wrong; yet, observations by the child of communication acts used by parents and peers, such as receiving punishment for being honest, undermine the ideals of complete disclosure.[24] Here, lying becomes a means of avoiding reprimand, a sort of self-preservation. Deception, developmentally, then is a natural part of our human communicative experience.

Given the already discussed aspects of the nature of deception, an examination of the reasonings for deceptive communicative acts becomes relevant. Hample identifies three main reasons for deception: (1) to benefit ourselves, (2) to benefit a relationship, and (3) to benefit others.[25] Bok elaborates further in his observation that we are all dependant on deception to get us out of scrapes, to save face, and attempt to avoid hurting other's feelings.[26] Both Hample and Bok support the notion that deception plays an integral part in maintaining and sustaining interpersonal relationships. Schwartz says that we use deceptive strategies to maintain our identifies:

> Daily life is. . .sparked by a constant tension between sincerity and guile, between self-release and self-containment, between the impulse to embrace that which is public and the drive to escape the discomfort of group demands. Accordingly, our identities are maintained by our ability to hold back as well as to affiliate.[27]

Schwartz reasons that we use holding-back and affiliating communication strategies to deal with the tensions of daily life. Put another way, we use holding-back (deception) strategies to preserve our emo-

tional equilbrium; give definition of ourselves to ourselves and others; and develop, maintain, and terminate human relationships.[28] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's study on deception determined that: "Relationships are more important than truth; relationships are what social life is all about."[29] Out of this notion, based in a psychological context, five types of reasons were observed explaining why and how persons use deceptive communication strategies. These typologies identify individual's reasons for deception and how communication acts based on such reasons function to maintain and sustain intimacy, power, personal identity, situation control, and the avoidance of tension and conflict in interpersonal relationships. An in-depth discussion of these areas follows:

(1) Face - information control is used to protect the actor's identity, the identity of the other, or the identity of another person outside the encounter. One's identity and self-worth are viewed as the most justifiable reason for controlling information.

(2) Relationship - information control is used to maintain, maximize, or terminate the degree of intimacy and/or social distance with the other. An action may control information to maintain a relationship by couching a refusal or denial to someone in a rhetoric that softens or tones it down. Information control is used to terminate a relationship by manipulating talk that fabri-

cates a justifiable reason for taking leave.

(3) Exploitation - information control is used to establish, maintain, or maximize power or influence over another. Discourse is chosen to manipulate another's actions in accordance with the actor's own desires or goals.

(4) Avoidance of tension and conflict - information control is used to preclude conflict or tension with another. Conversations are manipulated in such a way as to verbally avoid topics which have disruptive or conflicting potential.

(5) Situation Control - information control is used to maintain, redirect, or terminate social interaction with the other. Information control is used to manipulate the flow of interaction in encounter and the emerging definition of the situation.[30]

An individual's reasons for using deceptive communication strategies stem from a psychological need to control the flow of information for relational purposes, according to Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead. Their typologies are concerned primarily with the content aspects of deception as they relate to the individual and the control of information. These content typologies do not include the relational aspects of deceptive communicative acts and the pragmatic ways in which they function in interpersonal relationship systems. The reasons for which deception occurs explain the "whys" of deceptive communica-

tive acts. Content and relational aspects of deception must be considered in order to understand how deception functions in an interpersonal system. The reasons for deception are individually oriented, whereas the functions of deception are relationally oriented.

The Function of Deception in Interpersonal Relationships

We control information communicated to others for one reason or another in our everyday lives. The question here becomes one of how does the controlling of information function in relationships? Hample suggests that lies function as "equalizers in imbalanced interpersonal relations."[31] The more effective deception equalizes imbalanced relations, the more often the strategy is used.[32] Knapp and Comadena state that acts of deception function as adaptive responses to our environment to aid individuals in social self-preservation.[33] Parks outlines five contribution areas where deception functions to promote intimacy, define self, promote group cohesion, protect a person's credibility and authority, and promote social action. The following is an in-depth discussion of these areas:

(1) The development of intimate relationships - Information control plays a critical role within the dyad by providing relief when contact becomes too intense or prolonged. Deception promotes intimacy by protecting others, helping maintain a focus in conversations, and by avoiding tension conflict.

(2) The development of personal identity - Deception defines the self by implying that something is being kept from others. The development of personal iden-

tity is served when an individual consciously recognizes the fact that s/he controls the information passed to others, thus, enhancing one's self-concept.

(3) The development of group cohesion - Deception promotes cohesion by limiting individual's access to information which would make the group appear less attractive and by limiting the group's access to information which would make a given individual appear less attractive to the group. Cohesion could also be established by making sure that highly intimate disclosures did not leave the confines of the group.

(4) The dynamics of authority and power - Deception turns communication away from information which would threaten status thereby protecting credibility and authority. Deception is one way in which weaker parties resist the abuses of power and authority.

(5) The process by which groups of individuals produce social action - Deception promotes social action in several ways. It bolsters group cohesion, enhances and protects the exercise of power and authority, and guarantees that personal identity is not lost in the larger collectivity.[34]

Parks' contribution areas offer a psychological context which describes how deception functions in interpersonal relationships.

Analysis of the Wild Duck

To examine the function of deception in interpersonal relationships at more depth, Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's information flow typologies and Parks' contribution areas will be used as a framework to analyze deception communication acts in Ibsen's fictional capsule of human experience, The Wild Duck. These frameworks will serve as a guide to begin the investigation of the function of deception in relationships, but because of the limited treatment for exploring this complex phenomena, efforts will be made to expand Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's and Parks' and the reviewed literature's explicit concept of deception through Ibsen's systemic treatment of deception in his rich portrayal of human experience with its contextual, actional, and verbal expression complexities.

Synopsis of The Wild Duck

Ibsen depicts the interactions within the family system and its community. A predominate theme of deception threads through the interpersonal interactions of the Ekdal and Werle family systems which are kept stable and harmonious through deceptive communicative acts. The central family syste, the Ekdals, represent a low economic status family, who although poor, share a great deal of love and genuine concern for one another. Their life is reasonably harmonious until the appearance of Hjalmar's old schoolchum, Gregers Werle, after a 16 year absence, suffering from "inflamed integrity." Determined to play out his mission of life, Greger's imposes the "claim of the ideal" to transform Gina and Hjalmar's marriage into a "true marriage" advocating complete disclosure values. Motivated by this

ideal and his own guilt in the ruination of the Ekdal family's social and economic status, Gregers imposes a "total honesty" discourse value on Hjalmar and his wife, Gina. His imposition leads to the destruction of several relationships: the relationships between parent-child, husband-wife, and doctor-patient. The only redeeming action is the re-establishment of the husband-wife relationship realized as a result of the tragic sacrificial suicide of the couple's fourteen year old daughter, Hedvig, the victum of Greger's "inflamed integrity."

Interpretation: Expanded Concepts of Deception

Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's and Parks' information frameworks aid us in an examination of how deception communication strategies function to establish, maintain, maximize, and terminate intimate relationships, personal identify, and group cohesion in family systems and interpersonal relationships in The Wild Duck.[35] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's and Parks' categories also demonstrate how deception functions to protect the credibility and authority of Ibsen's characters in power as well as contribute to a process to produce social action. In the development of their intimate relationship, Gina conceals the truth from Hjalmar about her past relationship and the possible fathering of Hedvig by Greger's father prior to the Ekdals' marriage. Deception only becomes evident when we gain a temporal contextual knowledge of Gina's past and compare her actions and lack of verbal expression to Hjalmar. Deception functions in a psychological sense to establish, maintain and sustain an intimacy level in their relationship. Because of her love for Hjalmar and the desire to maintain the relationship,

Gina withholds information about her past. Gina's love and concern are demonstrated through her protective, caretaking actions as a genuine loving wife. Deception in this case allowed for a reciprocal love and concern for Gina by Hjalmar as is demonstrated by his view of Gina as "a good companion to have on life's journey." (43)

A degree of intimacy between Greger and his father is also maintained by deception. The social context of the situation reveals a less than compatible father-son relationship. Greger's resentment towards his father's destructive non-action to prevent the ruination of the Ekdal family, places the father-son relationship in a tenuous position. During Greger's sixteen year absense, Werle relays only partial information about his guilt-motivated caretaking activities of the Ekdal family. Werle's half-truths function in a psychological context to prevent the termination of the father-son relationship. It is only through an interaction between Hjalmar and Gregers during their reunion as friends, that deception becomes apparent. Hjalmar, in dialogue with Gregers, innocently reveals Werle's half-truths:

> Hjalmar: [with sentiment]. . .now I can see you don't have anything against me anymore. (5)

Greger's surprised reaction gives us a clue to the deception in his father's actions.

> Gregers: [in surprise] Whoever gave you that idea?
> Hjalmar: I know you did, Gregers. Your father told me himself. . . .Your father said it would be better not to write you about anything at all. (5-6)

Werle's attempts to conceal his caretaking activities serve to preserve some level of intimacy in the father-son relationship. Werle's attempts, however, are exposed in the continuing dialogue between Gregers and Hjalmar with regard to Werle's involvement in helping Hjalmar set up a business and the arrangement of Hjalmar's and Gina's marriage. Hjalmar tells Gregers of Werle's generous financial support to establish his photography business and the "coincidental" meeing and eventual marriage to Gina. Again, Greger's reacts with surprise:

> Hjalmar: Yes, surely you know that?. . .I understood him to say he'd written and told you.
>
> Gregers: Not a word about its being him. He must have forgotten. We've never exchanged anything but business letters. . .
>
> So it was my father . . .! (6)

The verbal punctuation in Greger's discourse and the pause prior to "So it was my father," not only gives clues of deception about Werle's half-truths, it also gives clues to the deception being carried out by Gregers to hide his suspicions about his father's deception. The revealing of Werle's half-truths contines when Hjalmar tells Gregers of his marriage to Gina who was once the Werles' housekeeper:

> Gregers: [looking at him] You mean Gina Hansen. . .?
>
> Hjalmar: I know for a fact that your father wrote and told you I had got married.
>
> Gregers: [who has risen] Yes, he did that, all right. But not that. . .? [Pacing the floor] (7)

The social and temporal context must be taken into account here with the verbal expressions and the actions of this situation. The social context dimension at work in this scene has to do with the lowly social status of a "housekeeper" in comparison to the high social status of the Werle family. Additionally, Gregers suspicions of Gina's past actions via his mother's stories, become the temporal context that adds fuel to the fire for additional contempt by Greger towards his father.

Not only do Werle's half-truths about the Ekdals to Gregers function to sustain personal contact and intimacy with his son, they also indirectly help to maintain a public image characteristic of the social contextual norms of a parent child-relationship:

> Werle: Look, Gregers--I know we differ on a great many things. But after <u>all</u>, we <u>are</u> father and son. Surely we ought to be able to reach some sort of understanding.
>
> Gregers: To all outward appearances, I take it you mean?
>
> Werle: Well, even that would be something. (14)

Werle's verbal punctuation, "we <u>are</u> father and son," gives a clue to the perceived importance of the parent-child relationship. Greger's reaction to Werle's comment and his accusation concerning the priority of outward appearances are illustrative of the social context and the motivation of the deceptive behaviors being carried out.

Secrets, a form of deception, also function in the development

of intimacy in the parent-child relationship. Hjalmar and Gina protect Hedvig by concealing all information about her deteriorating eyesight. In a psychological context, Hedvig's parents conceal the truth from their daughter as an act of compassion to spare her the painful truth about her eventual blindiness. Deception in this instance serves as a bonding agent in the parent-child relationship:

> Hjalmar: Oh, as you can imagine, we don't have the heart to tell her. She doesn't suspect a thing. . .Oh Gregers, it's heartbreaking for me. (24)

Actions are taken to remove Hedvig from school to lessen the chances of eye strain. Half-truths and diversionary communication strategies are used to protect Hedvig from the truth:

> Gina: Hedvig, darling, you mustn't sit and read so long.
>
> Hedvig: Oh, please Mother, can't I read a little more? Just a little!
>
> Gina: No, no. Now you put the book away. Your father doesn't like it; he never reads at night himself. (16)

Gina's verbal expression diverts attention away from Hedvig's eye condition to her father not reading at night; thus, intimating that this is reason for Hedvig not to read any longer. Gina's diversionary strategy functions to control the situation by redirecting attention on the father's likes and dislikes rather than the real issue of Hedvig's eye condition. The protective actions and deceptive verbal

expressions by Hedvig's parents demonstrate how deception functions as a valid communication strategy in the parent-child relationship.

Deception communication strategies are also used to insure an intimate friend-friend relationship. Social, physical, and psychological contextual dimensions are interwoven in the communicative interactions between Gregers and Hjalmar, long-time friends. Gregers represents a high social status element in his community, whereas, Hjalmar represents a less socially acceptable faction in the community partly because of his economic standing and partly because of his father's past experience in prison. The Ekdal's physical environment is very meager in contrast to the Werle affluence. Eager to have an intimate relationship with Gregers, Hjalmar discourages Greger's visit to his home for fear that it will influence the development of their relationship. Despite Hjalmar's efforts, however, Gregers comes to his home. To save face, Hjalmar attempts to rationalize the poor living conditions:

> Hjalmar: . . .We had a nicer place before, but this apartment has one great advantage--there's such a lot of splendid extra space. (23)

Hjalmar's emphasis on the "extra space" functions as a diversionary strategy to draw attention away from his low economic living conditions and status.

Hjalmar makes several attempts to save face to maintain a relationship with Gregers. Here again, one must take into account the social context of the situation to recognize deception at work.

Hjalmar's father, Old Ekdal, is a socially defeated man due to embezzlement allegations and subsequent imprisonment. To maintain his dignity, Old Ekdal lives out an illusion of being the once great bear hunter that he was. This illusion is re-enacted in a mock hunting ground constructed in the attic of their home. Dr. Relling, the community's physician, describes the scene:

> Dr. Relling: . . .He, the great bear-hunter, stalking rabbits in that dark attic. And there's not a happier sportsman alive than that old man when he's playing around in there with all that rubbish. The four or five dried-up Christmas trees he saved up, to him they're the same as the whole great living Hojdal forest. The rooster and chickens, why, they're wild fowl in the treetops; and the rabbits bumping around underfoot, they are bears he grapples with, the lusty old Nimrod. (64)

The social context of Old Ekdal's life style deviates from the social norms of appropriate behavior. Embarrassed by his father's behaviors, Hjalmar wards off Greger's curious attempts to see the attic, but to no avail. Hjalmar then attempts to discount his connection or involvement with his father's activities. His actions, however, contradict his verbal expressions denying involvement. In reality, Hjalmar encourages and participates in his father's illusion. However, Hjalmar plays down his interest to preserve an identity of normalcy in an at-

tempt to sustain his relationship with his friend Gregers:

Hjalmar: All this belongs to Father, you understand.

In reference to hunting rabbits in the attic:

Hjalmar: Only a bit of rabbit shooting now and then. Mostly for Father's sake, you understand.

Gregers: You have a hunting rifle too, I see.

Hjalmar: That's Father's old rifle. It's no good anymore, something's gone wrong with the lock. Still, it's fun to have around; we take it apart and clean it once in a while and grease it and put it together again. Of course, it's mostly Father that plays around with that sort of thing. (38)

Hjalmar distorts the truth about his participation in the hunting game by exaggerating Old Ekdal's participation, thus playing down his own for the purposes of maintining and sustaining an intimate relationship with Gregers. Here again, we have to take into account the context, actions, and the verbal expressions to recognize deception and how it functions in the friend-friend relationship.

Information control functions to develop and sustain the personal identity of persons in The Wild Duck. Hjalmar attends an upper social class dinner party in honor of Gregers which is attended by a number of dignitaries of the community. During the course of the evening, Old Ekdal shows up to take care of some unfinished work for Werle. Hjalmar reacts with embarrassment and ignores him. He puts down his glass and turns away toward the fireplace. Social, physical,

and psychological contextual dimensions influence the communication strategies used. As a socially ostrasized human being, Old Ekdal's entrance into the social scene of prestige and social status threatens Hjalmar's perceived public identity as someone other than who he is. Gregers recognizes the old man and asks Hjalmar if that was his father. Hjalmar lies:

Hjalmar: I don't know. . .I didn't notice. (10)

Hjalmar's actions and verbal expression discloses his deceptive response to Gregers:

Gregers: Then it really was he!. . .And you stood here and denied him!

Hjalmar: But how could I. . .? (10)

Gregers: . . .acknowledge your own father?

Hjalmar's actions and verbal expressions deny the presense of his father but function to preserve Hjalmar's deceptive personal identity apart from his father's scandalous past and low social status.

Later, Hjalmar attempts to build a personal identity as a knowledgable worldly man to his family by distorting the description of a party incident wherein he was made a fool of during a social discussion about vintaged wines. The social context in this incident revealed Hjalmar's ignorance, but his re-accounting of it through lies and half-truths lead his family to believe that he is a very knowledgable man:

Hjalmar: . . .Then we had a little controversy over Tokay.

Ekdal: Tokay, eh? Say, that's a grand wine.

Hjalmar: It can be. But let me tell you, not all vintages are equally fine. It all depends on how much sunshine the grapes have had.

Gina: Why, Hjalmar, if you don't know just about everything?

Ekdal: They started arguing about that?

Hjalmar: They tried to. But then they were given to understand that it's exactly the same with chamberlains. Not all vintages are equally good in their case either--it was pointed out.

Gina: Honest, the things you come up with!

Ekdal: Heh-heh! So they had to put that in their pipes smoke it!

Hjalmar: They got it straight in the face.

Gina: Imagine, straight in their face. (20)

This whole dialogue is filled with half-truths, lies, and exaggerations by Hjalmar. He leads his family to believe that he is a wise and knowledgable authority on vintage wines and that he put the uninformed in their place. The function of deception here results in a favorable personal identity with Hjalmar's family. Additionally, it contributes to his own self- concept as he defines himself to himself in the same way.

Further deception for the enhancement of personal identity is carried out through the doctor-patient relationship. Dr. Relling creates "life-lies" as prescriptive measures to prevent his patients from succumbing to self-contempt and despair. His efforts are based

in a psychological context to bolster his patients' self-image. To do this, he creates illusionary images for his patients, appropriate to each one giving them hope or diversion to survive in their individual worlds of failure:

> Dr. Relling: Take away the life-lie from the average person, and you take his happiness along with it. (64)

Relling's comments reveal his deceptive strategies. Such deceptive constructions enable his patients to avoid the reality of failure in their lives. Relling recognizes Hjalmar's true character as a weak unmotivated man:

> Dr. Relling: All right, all right. But then when our dear sweet Hjalmar managed to get into the University -- after a fashion -- right away he became the light of the future for his fellow students too. Of course, he was good-looking, the rascal--pink and white--just the type girls fall for. And as he had that easy sentimentality and that appealing something in his voice, and a pretty knack for declaiming other people's poetry and other people's ideas. . . (63)

Relling's assessment here is based on Hjalmar's past actions which showed very little individual ingenuity of his own. Relling prescribes a life lie for Hjalmar to keep him from despair - that of his potential to become a great "inventor." Psychologically, this illusion creates

a personal identity for Hjalmar to himself and his family as a great man just waiting to be uncovered. Socially, this illusion enhances Hjalmar's social identity and discounts the temporary physical living conditions he puts up with until his life's mission is fulfilled. Deception is seen through Hjalmar's non-action in a temporal context towards any inventing efforts. In actuality, Hjalmar never gets around to doing any inventing. He convinces himself and everyone that he is waiting for the inspiration that will materialze the great dream. His illusion is the life-blood of the Ekdal family system in terms of hope for a better life. As an inventor, Hjalmar's identity to himself and others is reinstated as a light of the future and as such, gives purpose and meaning to his existence and those around him.

In addition to deception contributing to the development of intimate relationships and personal identity, it also contributes to the development of group cohesion. The secret and actions carried out by the Ekdal family system concerning Hedvig's impending blindness bond the family together as a cohesive group united by adversity. Additionally, the life-lie acted out by Old Ekdal in his illusionary hunting ground and the family's participation in sustaining that life-lie, provides another cohesive element in the family structure. Everyone contributes to the deception reality of the hunting ground. Hjalmar willingly works with Old Ekdal on improvements.

Ekdal: . . .But now you, there are still one or two other things. . .

Hjalmar: Improvements, yes.

Ekdal: They've got to be done you know.

Hjalmar: Yes, let's have a little chat about these improvements, Father. Come over here and we'll sit down on the sofa. (21)

The psychological context of this scene of actions and verbal expressions demonstrates the function of deception in the development of the family's group cohesion. The illusion provides life for Old Ekdal as well as for his family.

To further illustrate the psychological contextual dimension of group cohesion, Old Ekdal and his family act out a mutual deception game. Old Ekdal lies about his drinking activities. He claims that he is working in his room when in actuality he is drinking brandy.

Hedvig: Are you getting hot water, Grandfather?

Ekdal: Yes I am. Need it for something. I've got writing to do, and the ink's gone as thick as mud--hm. (18)

Mother and daughter look at each other:

Gina: Where on earth do you suppose he got the money.

Hedvig: . . .he must have got a bottle on credit somewhere. (18)

Hjalmar comes home and the mutual secret continues between the three of them with regard to Old Ekdal's activities.

Gina: . . .he's been out and got himself some hot water.

Hjalmar: Aha, is he sitting and. . ." . . .Dear me--my poor old white-haired father! -- Well, let him be, let him get what pleasure he can out of life. (19)

Again, we see the function of deception by Hjalmar, Gina, and Hedvig concerning Old Ekdal's drinking to save his personal identity which in turn functions to make the family system more cohesive. Deception in this instance functions as an act of compassion for a poor broken down penniless old man.

Deception also contributes to the dynamics of authority and power. The social context sets the stage for these dynamics. Werle, a wealthy, successful businessman maintains his authority and power through lies and half-truths. Old Ekdal, once Werle's friend and business partner, is charged with fraud in a joint-venture timber deal with Werle and sent to prison. Although Werle shared some guilt in the matter, he denied such and was acquitted.

> Gregers: I doubt Lieutenant Ekdal himself knew what he was doing.
>
> Werle: Maybe so. But the fact remains that he was found guilty and I acquitted. . .Acquittal is acquittal. . .I can assure you Gregers, here in town that whole story was forgotten ages ago--as far as it concerns me. (12)

Werle's half-truths and lies divert attention away from him and function to sustain his social status of power and authority. Guilt-ridden by his actions, Werle hires Ekdal to do copying for him at an inflated wage. This action externally appears as an act of compassion for a downtrodden old man, but, this deceptive action functions in actuality to alleviate Werle's guilty conscience:

> Werle: I have given Ekdal copying to do for the office,

> and I pay him far, far more for his work than it is worth. . . .You can take my word for it, Gregers, I've put myself out as far as I possibly could, short of encouraging all kinds of talk and suspicion. (2)

Socially, Werle's exaggerated deceptive behaviors provides an image of benevolence and functions to maintain and sustain Werle's social position of power and authority within the community. His actions contribute to his own personal and social identity of authority and power as a compassionate, trustworthy citizen, thus, enhancing the degree of intimacy experienced within his business and social relationships.

A final area in which deception contributes is in the process by which groups of individuals produce social action. The collective deceptions lived out in the Werle and Ekdal family systems represent examples of human experience wherein the constructs of deception become the reality. As collectives, these two family systems represent a kind of social action group that maintain and sustain their social self-preservation through deception contrary to ideological proclamations for "total honesty." This is demonstrated through various "truth" realities created by deception. For example, deception creates a reality of friendship between Hjalmar and Ekdal, a father-son relationship between Gregers and his father, a marriage relationship between Gina and Hjalmar, a tolerable world for a defeated man, Old Ekdal, a world of success for Hjalmar, and a compassionate world for Hedvig. In each of these relational examples, deception communication strategies

function in multiple contextual, actional, and verbal expression combinational processes that construct deceptive "realities" for the family systems and their members to survive in.

Conclusions

The analysis of communication acts within the play, The Wild Duck, is not a comprehensive representation of the phenomena of deception contained within it. Examples selected in this study are a very small sampling of the richness in Ibsen's work, but they demonstrate the function of deception as a communication strategy in interpersonal relationships. Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's explicit psychological communication typologies have been identified and examined within the context of the play and within Parks' contribution areas. However, as illustrated through this analysis, the static linear information flow model was not adequate for examining the complexities of deception in terms of gaining an in-depth understanding of the processual, interactional, and contextual dynamics of deception constructs in relationships. To maintain the rich, complex aspects of deception in the human communication experience, content and relational aspects of communication acts must be explored. As such, a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of deception can be achieved.

A comparison of Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead's instrumental concept of deception with Ibsen's systemic conceptual depiction of deception expands the understanding of deception constructs as important and essential communication acts in interpersonal relationships. Ibsen's portrayal of the deception in the human experience provides a panoramic view

of the sequence of events and communicative actions which discloses deception constructs as "lived-world" truths. These "lived-world" truths, although fictional in their beginning, become the reality that contributes to the interactants social self-preservation. The processual nature of this phenomena changes what was once a fiction into a truth. The social norms and rules within the deception constructs are more the lived-reality than the ideological social norms and rules tied to institutional (church, political, economical) absolute "Truths". For example, deceptive "truths" function as compassionate acts in the family system to protect Hedvig from the knowledge about her deteriorating eyesight as well as the reality of Old Ekdal's loss of social dignity. Ibsen's systemic treatment of "lived-world" realities gives us insight into two kinds of truth social constructs. One, the interpersonal social structures of deception "truths" and the institutional social structures of absolute "Truth." Both types of constructs exist simultaneously in our lives. Sometimes they work together meeting the needs of both the individual and the ideal. For example, the economic assumptions implying a correlation between money, power, and authority function to enhance Werle's economic social position in the community, and at the same time enhance his own self-esteem. In other situations, however, the interpersonal and institutional constructs are in conflict. For example, the ideological social Truth ideal of the institution of marriage, values complete disclosure behaviors, but as we witness in Gina and Hjalmar's marriage relationship, the fulfillment of such values destroys their marriage. The interpersonal deception "truths"

uphold the institution of marriage through the withholding of information for the express purpose of preserving it. This contradiction in social constructs is a common reality of our everyday lives. Ibsen's fictional work attacks the unrealistic emphasis of absolute ideological Truth constructs through his actor, Gregers, who suffers from "inflamed integrity." Gregers determined efforts to impose Truth principles on a family system maintained and sustained on deceptive "truths" leads to the eventual destruction of the system. Ibsen's depiction of human experience reveals the essentialness of interpersonally constructed fictional "truths" as the real reality in the human experience and the idealistic institutionally imposed "Truth" reality as fictional in terms of its function and value in establishing, maintaining, and/or sustaining interpersonal relationships. Both kinds of constructs, then are fictive. At the same time both present a "truth" reality that attempts to make sense and meaning in our lived interpersonal experience. The terms truth and deception begin to change in their meaning. Deception becomes "truth", and "Truth" becomes deception.

Ibsen's philosophical approach and treatment of deception in the family systems calls attention to the inadequacy of an information flow model in treating the complexities of deception in interpersonal relationships. Relational aspects have to be considered in addition to the content aspects of deception communicative acts. For example, how does the relationship between individuals affect the use of deception in the relationship such as parent-child, husband-wife, or friend-friend. We get an indication through Ibsen's work that de-

ception in the parent-child relationship is different than deception in the friend-friend relationship. In the parent-child and child-parent relationship (Hjalmar, Gina, and Hedvig and Hjalmar and Old Ekdal), deception is used because of the relationship suggesting an unintentional deceptive act. In contrast, the friend-friend relationship (Hjalmar and Gregers) deceptive acts seem intentionally performed to do something to the relationship. These examples introduce two important points with regard to the function and characteristics of the phenomena of deception. One, there is a relational aspect having to do with the relationship of persons and their use of deception, and secondly, there is an implicit suggestion that not all deceptive acts are intentional. Ibsen's characters show us a kind of spontaneous deceptive act that responds to persons rather than controlling them.

Another area of interest on the interpersonal level exposed to us by Ibsen is self-deception and its relational role in the interaction among family systems. The limitations of Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead and the other social science literature presented in this study are again pointed out in that self-deception is not included in any of their discussions. Ibsen, however, shows us the function of self-deception in the family system. Dr. Relling's life-illusion constructs provide meaning and purpose to the Ekdal family system. Hjalmar's life-illusion as a soon-to-be world famous inventor constructs a personal reality as well as a family system reality. Hjalmar's belief in himself and his family's belief in him, directs all of their activities and meaning around the constructed fictive truth. Even though Hjalmar's actions

give no evidence of inventing, his self-deception "truth" carries him and his family through their daily life with hope for the future. Self-deception becomes a key internal communication strategy in Ibsen's actor's interactions.

An expanded understanding into the nature, function, and complexity of the phenomena of deception has been accomplished through this study. Interestingly enough, it has been done through a fictional work, The Wild Duck. An analysis of deception in its processual, interactional, and contextual dimensions revealed limitations in the literature reviewed, but, more importantly, the analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of deception. Initially, Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, and Parks provided a framework from which to begin which gave insight into the content aspects of deception. Drawing from Watzlawick's communication axioms, one, that all activities are communication, and two, that there are both content and relational aspects to communication,[36] enlarges the viewing platform for an analysis of deception and its function in the interactions within Ibsen's capsule of human experience, The Wild Duck. The following conclusions are offered in summary of this study:

(1) Deception, as a natural phenomena in our everyday human experience, is an important and essential communication act in interpersonal relationships.

(2) Deception is a construct of social meaning that often becomes the "truth" of our lived-realities.

(3) Information flow models are not adequate for exploring the complexities of deception in human

communicative interactions.

(4) The study of deception as a communication act must take into account both the content and relational aspects of the communication act along with the context, behavioral actions, and verbal expressions used.

Implications for further study of the phenomena of deception as a communication strategy include but are not limited to:

(1) A systemic investigation of the phenomena of deception.

(2) Further exploration into the relationship between interpersonal relationships and the use of deception.

(3) Further examination of the influence of self-deception as a communication act in relationships.

(4) Investigation of unintentional or spontaneous deception acts in interactions.

Notes

[1] Cf. R. Wolk and A. Henley, The Right to Lie. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1972) in David R. Brandt, Gerald R. Miller, and John E. Hocking, "The Truth-Deception Attribution: Effects of Familiarity on the Ability of Observers to Detect Deception," Human Communication Research, 6 (1980), 99.

[2] Sissela Bok, Lying, Moral Choice in Public and Private Life (London: The Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 11.

[3] See for example: Joyce Ellyn Bauchner, Elyse A. Kaplan, and Gerald R. Miller, "Detecting Deception: The Relationship of Available Information to Judgmental Accuracy in Initial Encounters," Human Communication Research, 6 (1980) 253-264; David R. Brandt, John E. Hocking, and Gerald R. Miller, "The Truth-Deception Attribution: Effects of Familiarity on the Ability of Observers to Detect Deception," Human Communication Research, 6 (1980) 99-110; John E. Hocking, Joyce Bauchner, Edmund P. Kaminski, and Gerald R. Miller, "Detecting Deceptive Communication From Verbal, Visual and Paralinguistic Cues," Human Communication Research, 6 (1980) 33-46.

[4] Ronny E. Turner, Charles Edgley, and Glen Olmstead, "Information Control in Conversations: Honesty is Not Always the Best Policy," Kansas Journal of Sociology, 11 (1975) 69-89.

[5] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control," p. 70.

[6] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control," p. 70.

[7] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control," p. 70.

[8] Charles M. Rossiter, Jr. and Barnett Pearce, Communicating Personally (Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Co., Inc., 1975), p. 71.

[9] Cf. Jankelevitch, Traite des certus (Bordas, Paris, 1949), in Marcel Eck, Lies and Truth, trans. Bernard Murchland (London: The Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 28.

[10] John Powell, Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am? (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1969), p. 117.

[11] Malcom R. Parks, "Ideology in Interpersonal Communication: Off the Couch and Into the World," in Communication Yearbook, 5, ed. Michael Burgoon (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982), p. 89.

[12] Henrik Ibsen, The Wild Duck, trans. Dounia B. Christiani (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1968).

[13] The use of a literary piece provides a means to illustrate a thesis in a manageable size with a reasonable independence of information within it. Though fixed by artistic license, it is possibly more real than reality. Paul Watzlawick, Janet H. Beavin, and Con D. Jackson, Pragmatics of Human Communication, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1967), p. 150.

[14] Mark L. Knapp, Roderick P. Hart, and Harry S. Dennis, "An Exploration of Deception as a Communication Construct," Human Communication Research, 1 (1975), 15.

[15] Bok, Lying, p. 15.

[16] Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), p. 6.

[17] Mark L. Knapp and Mark E. Comadena, "Telling It Like It Isn't: A Review of Theory and Research on Deceptive Communication," Human Communication Research, 5 (1979), 271.

[18] Knapp and Comadena, "Telling It," 271.

[19] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control," 83.

[20] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control." Verbal expression typology descriptions have been paraphrased from the material. 73-77.

[21] Communication contexts include the physical, social, psychological and temporal context of the communication act.

[22] Joost A. Meerloo, "Camouflage Versus Communication: In the ginning was a lie," Communication, 3 (1978), 4.

[23] Meerloo, "Camouflage," 4.

[24] Robert A. Stebbins, "Putting People On: Deception of Our Fellowman in Everyday Life," Sociology and Social Research, 59 (1975), 199.

[25] Dale Hample, "Purposes and Effects of Lying," The Southern Speech Communication Journal, 46 (1980), 37.

[26] Bok, Lying, p. 20.

[27] Barry Schwartz, "The Social Psychology of Privacy," American Journal of Sociology, 73 (1968), 752.

[28] See for example: Hample, "Purposes and Effects," 33; Knapp and Comadena, "Telling," 275.

[29] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control," 83.

[30] Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead, "Information Control." Reason typology material has been paraphrased. 77-82.

[31] Hample, "Purposes and Effects," 33.

[32] Knapp and Comadena, "Telling," 275.

[33] Knapp and Comadena, "Telling," 275.

[34] Parks, "Ideology." Contribution area typology material has been paraphrased. 90-92.

[35] All excerpts quoted have been taken from Ibsen, The Wild Duck.

[36] Watzlawick, Pragmatics, p. 49.

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